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FM AMEMBASSY TBILISI
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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 001021

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DEPT FOR EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, RULING PARTY NEGOTIATE; JOINT
OPPOSITION CANCELS MANDATES

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: On June 12, Giorgi Targamadze's Christian Democratic Movement (CDM) reached tentative agreement with Parliamentary Speaker Davit Bakradze and the ruling United National Movement (UNM) on many of the terms whereby the CDM would enter Parliament. These terms include changes to the election and legal systems, the media, and Parliament. The opposition appears to have won minimal victories, as the UNM made nominal compromises. Meanwhile, the Joint Opposition and Labor Party denounced the agreement as "pre-arranged." On June 12, Joint Opposition leader David Gamkrelidze said he would not accept his seat in Parliament. On June 13, he and 12 other bloc leaders formally canceled their mandates, yielding 12 vacant seats out 150 in Parliament. Depending on the Labor Party's pending decision, the opposition will control up to 19 seats, with two by-elections this fall. End summary.

CDM, UNM Reportedly Reach Preliminary Agreement

12. (SBU) On June 12, according to press reports, the CDM reached tentative agreement with the UNM over their memorandum. The key points of agreement reportedly include:

- One lawmaker who is not a member of the parliamentary majority will be appointed to the Supreme Council of Justice.
- The ruling party agrees to not amend the constitution "without active consultations with the opposition" (as opposed to "agreement with the opposition.")
- Authorities pledge to "study and analyze" elections violations, rather than to "investigate" them, as previously demanded.
- The ruling party will establish legal guarantees to provide "balanced" access to public TV for "qualified" political parties (those who won at least 4 percent of the vote in the previous parliamentary elections and at least 3 percent in the last local elections).
- The number required to establish a faction is reduced to 6 MPs from 7.
- The ruling party reiterated its readiness to provide positions of vice-speaker and deputy chairmen of parliamentary committees to the opposition.

However, several key points of the "Anti-Crisis Memorandum" were not addressed. The following two demands were reportedly dismissed or refused by Bakradze and the UNM.

- Direct elections of mayors and governors was refused.
- There was no discussion of allowing the opposition official status of parliamentary minority.

But Substantial Concessions?

13. (U) Initial public impressions are that the government's concessions are not substantial, but may provide political cover for the CDM to enter Parliament. Daily newspaper "24 Saati" analyzed the provisional agreement. They noted neither the position of vice-speaker nor deputy chairmen have any particular influence over parliamentary decision-making. Furthermore, while the ability to form a faction is a boon in terms of being able to meet with international missions, their influence within parliament is minimal. The paper expects that Targamadze will present another amendment making further demands including re-chairing the Committee on Human Rights with an opposition member, insisting on equal representation in investigative commissions, and forming a special committee for budget control, to be chaired by an opposition MP. "24 Saati" speculated that none of these demands are likely to be met.

14. (U) Additional questions surround the CDM's demand for opposition MPs to chair Parliamentary committees. Ruling party MPs were elected as chairmen for all 13 Parliamentary committees on June 11. Two new committees will also be established, reportedly both to be chaired by ruling party MPs. (Note: All Parliamentary leadership positions will be reported septel. End note.)

Joint Opposition Cries Foul

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15. (C) The Joint Opposition and the Labor Party were absent from the meeting. Some opposition leaders insinuated that the memorandum and subsequent talks were "pre-arranged." Mamuka Katsitadze of the New Rightists Party called the CDM "collaborators" and said they "sold out." Joint Opposition accusations that the CDM is financed by figures close to Saakashvili continue. Meanwhile, Targamadze continues to push for change from within the government. Dima Shashkin of the International Republican Institute (IRI) told Poloff on June 12 that if the opposition attacks on Targamadze continue, he will have no choice but to take the gloves off and respond in kind.

16. (C) Shalva Natelashvili's Labor Party has been largely silent. Two members from their party list have agreed to go into Parliament, regardless of the Party's decision. Meanwhile, Natelashvili continues to call for a boycott, although he has not announced publicly whether he will accept his mandate. Natelashvili has appealed for outside assistance in encouraging Gamkrelidze to join Parliament. (Comment: Party leaders have bought time, as the CDM and Joint Opposition take center stage. It is likely they are watching the results of the ongoing negotiations and the public's response, before deciding whether and when to join Parliament. End comment.)

Gamkrelidze's "Moral Decision"

17. (C) On June 12 Gamkrelidze told Poloff he would not join Parliament. Gamkrelidze said that he would lose credibility and integrity if he were to join this "illegitimate" Parliament. He claimed he cannot confer legitimacy on this "corrupt, Soviet-style government" by enjoining it. Gamkrelidze said that his supporters understand his actions as a "moral decision" and he promised to continue to speak out against the government from outside Parliament "as long as I can." He alleged that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is attacking and arresting opposition activists, and claimed they may come after him in the future.

18. (C) Gamkrelidze noted that his party receives state

funding from the government, based on his results in the January presidential election. Gamkrelidze asked for assistance should the government rescind this funding. Poloff acknowledged Gamkrelidze's request and the call for a boycott, but argued Gamkrelidze could more effectively fight for liberal democracy inside of Parliament. Poloff also said it would be difficult to garner support for Gamkrelidze's party if he gave up his mandate. Gamkrelidze remained unmoved. (Comment: Gamkrelidze appeared stressed. However, many Georgians believe that he has made a decision which is now culturally impossible to reverse. End comment.)

Joint Opposition Turns in Mandates,
Seats to go Unfilled

19. (U) Gamkrelidze and 11 other Joint Opposition MPs-elect formally requested their mandates be canceled by the Parliament on June 13. Only four of the 17 Joint Opposition candidates have said publicly that they will not give up their mandates. One, Jondi Baghaturia is reportedly still wavering. Consequently, two majoritarian and 10 party list seats will be left vacant in the Parliament. By-elections will be held this fall for the two majoritarian seats (Gamkrelidze's and David Saganelidze's). The 10 party list seats will remain vacant for the duration of the Parliament, following the Joint Opposition's annulment of their party list. This will leave 14 or 15 opposition members in Parliament (two independent opposition majoritarians elected on the Republican ticket, six CDM members, four or five likely members from the Joint Opposition, and two from Labor). If the rest of Labor eventually joins, this would increase the number of opposition MPs to 18 or 19 out of 150 total seats.
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